

such a rigid censorship that they did not dare to print political information of any value.

During the great battle of the Exclusion Bill, many newspapers were suffered to appear, the Protestant Intelligences, the Current Intelligence, the Domestic Intelligence, the True News, the London Mercury. None of these was published oftener than twice a week. None exceeded in size a single small leaf. The quantity of matter which one of them contained in a year was not more than is often found in two numbers of the Times. After the defeat of the Whigs it was no longer necessary for the King to be sparing in the use of that which all his Judges had pronounced to be his undoubted prerogative. At the close of his reign no newspaper was suffered to appear without his allowance and his allowance was given exclusively to the London Gazette. The London Gazette came out only on Mondays and Thursdays. The contents generally were a royal proclamation, two or three Tory addresses, notices of two or three promotions, an account of a skirmish between the imperial troops and the Janissaries on the Danube, a description of a highwayman, an announcement of a grand cockfight between two persons of honour, and an advertisement offering a reward for a strayed dog. The whole made up two pages of moderate size. Whatever was communicated respecting matters of the highest moment was communicated in the most meagre and formal style. Sometimes, indeed, when the government was

disposed to gratify the public curiosity
respecting an im-
portant transaction, a broadside was put
forth giving
fuller details than could be found in the
Gazette : but
neither the Gazette nor any supplementary
broadside
printed by authority ever contained any
intelligence which
it did not suit the purposes of the Court to
publish. The
most important parliamentary debates, the
most impor-
tant state trials, recorded in our history, were
passed over
in profound silence.¹

¹1, 380 (iii).